Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) have also been set up. One of the primary functions of these commissions is to rationalise tariff so that the power utilities earn an adequate profit. The government plays a catalytic role by encouraging the states to undergo reforms. A new plan scheme has been launched from 2000-2001 wherein financial assistance will be extended to those states which make a commitment to reforms. One of the latest initiatives of the government is to undertake complete metering of all consumers in a time bound manner by December, 2001 which would help in augmenting the revenues of the SEBs. Further, the Government, in its effort to promote reforms in the north eastern states, proposes to give financial assistance for setting up of a joint SERC for the region.

The above measures are expected to improve the financial viability of the power utilities/SEBs, which in turn, would enthuse the private sector to invest in the power sector.

**Exemption of Power Equipments from Custom Duty**

3480. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested for total exemption from custom duty for power equipment of all categories of power projects; and

(b) if so, the steps taken on their request?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

**National Fuel Policy**

3481. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed to set up a Committee for formulating a National Fuel Policy for the power sector;

(b) if so, the details theeof alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed by Goverment for ensuring adequate and timely fuel supply of appropriate quality to the power plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) to (c) The Government has not set up any Committee to formulate a naitonal fuel policy for the power sector. However, in order to ensure adequate and timely fuel supply of appropriate qualtiy to power plants there are two standing linkage committees for Long term and Short term under the aegis of Department of Coal (Ministry of Mines and Minerals Apart from the department of Coal, representatives from Ministry of Railways and Power, Central Electricity Authority and Coal producing companies constitute the Committee. Based on the projections of long term source-wise linkage, power generation targets of power houses, requirement of coal by individual power stations, availability of coal at various supply sources and available transport infrastructure, the Standing Linkage Committee Short Term) finalises the monthly coal linkage of power stations on quarterly basis. The short term linkage, thus granted by the Committee also has provision to take care of any eventuality arising out of additional generation by the power stations, fluctuation in availability, bottleneck in transportation system and or infrastructural constraints either at the loading or unloading ends. The supplies against linkages are, however, subject to adequate and timely payments by the SEBs/Power Utilities according to agreed payment terms with Coal India Ltd.

Similarly, for gas, there is an inter-ministerial Gas Linkage Committee which is Chaired by Secretary (Petroleum which decides allotment on the basis of availability of gas and computed economic value of the project. Priority is given to power and fertiliser plants.

**Measures Taken for the Security of NHPC Staff**

3482. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that recently the militants gunned down Chief of the National Hydro-electric Power Corporation (NHPC) Loktak Hydro-electric project in Manipur;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the project executives have been receiving threats on their lives earlier also;

(d) if so, the details thereof;